Chapter 10

Supervising student-teachers' research: Between reinforcing our supervisor-researcher identities and enabling novice teacher-researchers

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Introduction

Working in the academic world involves taking on several roles and positions within different landscapes of practice (Wenger, 2010; Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015) such as teaching, doing administrative activities, researching, and supervising theses. Supervising is perhaps one of the most important activities. However, it is usually neglected by faculty members because of the many responsibilities one has helping in the development process of a research piece that will be produced by a student-teacher who is just being introduced into the research culture. Nevertheless, being a supervisor-researcher is a critical role in that it enables student-teachers to complete their theses and learn how to conduct research, and provides opportunities for our continuous professional development.

Through a trioethnographic approach, in which the researchers are completely involved through descriptions of reactions, occurrences, and expectations (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008), this chapter retrospectively describes our experiences and pedagogic practices as full-time professors in a public university in Ecuador, managing to cope with the Higher Education Law by organising and complying with teaching, supervising, research, and administration hours. To write this piece, we decided to use one of the modes of positioning in an ethnography suggested by Van

Maanen (2011) and use confessional writing, which involves adopting a personal style and using the first person. The use of the pronouns we/our include the three authors of the chapter.

We are three bilingual teacher educators navigating our dual role as supervisor-researchers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) student-teachers working on their final graduation project as a requirement to finish their Bachelor (BA) in English Language Teaching (ELT) or Masters (MA) in ELT programmes. Through our dialogues and stories, the tensions of the different roles and positions we hold are unpacked, explaining our own path to professional development. First as researchers, by observing and analysing our EFL student-teachers' research journey, and second as thesis supervisors, helping students construct their understanding of the importance of researching their own classroom, not only to reflect on and improve their practice but most importantly to develop professionally and acquire a teacher-researcher identity. Therefore, as a result of the combination of both roles, we take a supervisor-as-researcher reflective stance which enables us to reflect on and research our own supervision practice. By being involved in the process of supervision with such a standpoint, we learn from the process per se and foster our professional development as supervisors and researchers.

Drawing on qualitative data from our conversations and written contributions, our experiences, journeys, and reflections are interpreted and framed within the literature, providing insights about the benefits that arise from researching our students and learning from them while they write their thesis. Furthermore, the voices of our student-teachers also collected through written contributions, are intertwined in our conversation to describe their theses journey and relationship with us, their supervisors.

Supervision as a social learning activity

The thesis supervision process can be considered and interpreted a social learning activity which could be analysed through the lens of the social theory of learning of Wenger (1998), which places learning within lived experiences and participation in our own contexts while constructing identities. The theory is built upon assumptions about the importance of learning and the nature of knowledge. As social beings, we are part of learning processes, which are a social activity that requires active participation. This social participation shapes who we are, what we do, and how we interpret what we do (Fajardo Dack, 2017). The social theory of learning highlights the relationship between the individual and the world, activity, cognition, learning, and knowing (Lave, 1993; Lave & Wenger, 1991). That is, learning involves meaning, negotiation, active participation, and the construction of identities (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998).

As a social learning activity, supervision involves what Grant and Graham (1999) term as a pedagogical relationship in which supervisors and supervisees actively participate in a relationship that includes academic, emotional, professional and personal characteristics. In this regard, Vehviläinen and Löfström (2016) claim that as a pedagogical activity, supervision not only calls for research experience but also for pedagogical expertise which will facilitate a learning and participatory process that aims to shape the identity of the supervisee.

The supervisor acquires different roles, and within each role, responsibilities, in an activity/relationship that involves the several dimensions numbered above, and depending also on the personality and trajectory of each supervisor and supervisee, the stance taken towards the roles and responsibilities may vary. Dysthe (2002) distinguishes three different models of supervision based on disciplinary, institutional, and personal factors: (1) the teaching model which describes the traditional power dynamic, student-teacher, where the student depends

strongly on the knowledge of the supervisor being transferred to the student, the prescriptive

feedback and the correction of the text, (2) the apprenticeship model in which both actors

participate and cooperate, but the supervisor still takes the lead; however, supervisees observe

and are not as dependent on the supervisor, and (3) the partnership model where the pedagogical

relationship is seen as equalitarian and based on dialogue and negotiation; responsibilities and

expectations are joined and there is a strong sense of collaboration. In this last model, feedback is

more constructive and it aims to develop students' critical thinking and judgment skills. Dysthe

(2002) suggests that these three models are not mutually exclusive, but rather there can be

aspects that overlap among them.

Most theses supervisors, daring to say all of them, have been appointed as such without

having prior experience or proper training. Usually, a professor is given the supervisory task

based on the assumption that having a master's degree or having taken research courses is

enough. Halse and Malfroy (2010) and Lee (2007) questioned whether there is a necessity for

thesis supervision training, especially for those who did not have successful experiences as

supervisees themselves; after all our own trajectories as learners likely direct our practices as

teachers and supervisors. Nevertheless, we should be aware that 'some of what was learned

during the apprenticeship-of-experience must be unlearned if they do not serve the supervisees'

(Ashari, 2012: 36). In the words of Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2015):

> Reflecting on our own trajectories as learners, most of us will be amazed at how many
>
> practices we have engaged in, dabbled in, visited, encountered, or avoided over the years.
>
> In some cases, joining or leaving a practice involved crossing a significant boundary and
>
> constituted a major event or transition. (p. 19)

The supervision journey might be a rewarding learning experience for both the supervisor and the students as this pedagogical relationship should be bilateral, that is supervisors also learn from supervisees (Bailey, 2012). However, it might be a road with issues and difficulties, especially when not knowing the strategies to become a good supervisor. Ashari (2012) suggested two strategies to achieve successful supervision which usually lead to achieving a good thesis. She mentions key factors such as setting expectations, for the supervisor and the supervisee, in terms of meetings, revisions, and following advice, and providing timely, constructive and supportive feedback in written form and in-person. Furthermore, she recommends that the supervisor must have particular competencies to improve the supervising journey/relationship. A supervisor must have technical and interpersonal competencies, the former to be able to read, write, listen and edit students' work; the latter, to us the most important and which includes patience, respect, care, consideration, and humility, to provide feedback and support that goes beyond the intellectual, research domain. Ashari (2012) mentions:

A supervisor must be patient with the supervisees, especially when they are struggling between writing and juggling their responsibilities as a student, employee, spouse, or parent. Supervisors must be supportive of their supervisees. Although supervisors are regarded as being in a position of power (Lynch, 2014), common human courtesy of respecting one's fellow human being must prevail. (p. 36)

Having the interpersonal competency relates directly to Casanave's (2014) distinction between being/having a supervisor and a mentor. All students writing a thesis have supervisors,

but not all of them have mentors. Being a mentor requires giving intellectual and emotional support equal importance, becoming a role model, being co-learners in the learning process, and, in the long term, providing opportunities for mentees to participate in professional activities, which results in great benefits to students. In this regard, Lee (2007) emphasises that emotional bond should be seen as a strength in the mentor-mentee relationship as it helps to develop the confidence and empowerment novice researchers need.

As mentioned before, supervision is considered a social learning activity in which both the supervisor and the student mutually learn from each other and find opportunities for constant growth. During the time we have been supervising theses, accompanying in the design, writing, and presentation processes of student-teachers, we have experienced benefits and some downsides; however, the several learning advantages that the supervising activity involves overcome any shortcoming. Thus, considering our and our students' stories and its connection to relevant literature, we decided to examine our journeys as supervisor-researchers to make connections of our stories to our students' experiences while writing their theses. This study and the writing of this chapter as a result has allowed us to revisit and reflect on our practices and our students' perceptions of working with us, using that reflection process as a tool for our professional development.

Methodology

In this chapter, we use a qualitative trioethnographical approach to explore our experiences as supervisor-researchers. We decided on this approach as we consider that it allows us to tell our stories and elaborate on the tensions and negotiations involved in our journeys.

An ethnography engages processes and forms of representation that differ from other approaches (Rinehart & Earl, 2016). The three types of ethnography; namely, autoethnography, duoethnography, and collaborative ethnographies allow the researcher(s) to narrate personal stories that are reflections of personal and social experiences lived. Before focusing on the collaborative one, which is the type we adopted, we offer the definition of autoethnography provided by Adams, Holman Jones, and Ellis (2015) which we consider serves as an umbrella for the other types. According to these authors, an autoethnography is a research method that

> uses a researcher's personal experience to describe and critique cultural beliefs, practices, and experiences; acknowledges and values a researcher's relationships with others; uses deep and careful self-reflection; shows 'people in the process of figuring out what to do, how to live, and the meaning of their struggles;' balances intellectual and methodological rigor, emotion, and creativity; strives for social justice and to make life better. (pp. 1-2)

For us it made sense to choose an ethnography as an approach to tell our stories, and even more a collaborative type, a 'trioethnography', borrowing the term coined by Breault, Hackler, and Bradley (2012). In this (collaborative/trio) ethnography, which according to Lassiter (2005) is 'the collaboration of researchers and subjects in the production of ethnographic texts, both fieldwork and writing' (p. 84), we wanted to examine similar events from multiple viewpoints and with multiple lenses, not to arrive at the ultimate single truth, but to portray that our realities are valid individual representations and interpretations of the social (Richardson, 2000). In this analysis process we, the researchers or ethnographers, in this case, become what Weinsten and Weinsten term as the interpretative bricoleur who 'produces a bricolage – that is, a pieced-

together set of representations that are fitted to the specifics of a complex situation' (as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000: 4).

For this type of work, it is important to clarify our connection to the research or in the words of Rowe (2014), our positionality, which frames our stance in 'in relation to the social and political context of the study – the community, the organisation or the participant group' (628). The nature of our work in the university as teachers, educative administrators, researchers, and thesis supervisors allowed us to take on various roles at different times, but for this specific research, we took a dual role. Our positioning remained emic because we looked at ourselves as supervisor-researchers of our own students which has aided in our participatory and reflective processes of co-inquiring, changing and challenging issues (Rowe, 2014).

Following Breault, Hackler, and Bradley's (2012) claim that duo(trio)ethnography should remain open, avoiding being prescriptive, we have included the analysis and interpretation of our individually written dialogues and narratives to engage in critical collaboration. We completed two levels of coding (Creswell, 2014) to first holistically organize the information into categories, and second, to analyze the data looking for thematic units (Stake, 1995; Wolcott, 1994 as cited in Creswell, 2014). Furthermore, as we wanted to better understand and delve into our position and roles, we included our students' voices in our narratives. We collected information about our students' personal experiences while writing their theses and working with us through questionnaires. Our students' answers were analyzed and interpreted to interweave their voices in our conversations and make our contribution more robust. Additionally, we want to highlight that researcher trust, as a key feature of ethnography, was kept at all times as it 'promotes duoethnographers' sharing, disclosing, and interrogating personal aspects of their

histories' (Sawyer, 2012: 115). Researcher trust was maintained by creating safe spaces for sharing our stories and by being responsible in providing a critical stance within our narratives.

To guarantee confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity of our students, we decided to use pseudonyms and also use their contributions indistinctly, meaning that their voices are not necessarily connected to the narrative of the professor who supervised their work. Since it is of public domain who are the supervisors of a specific thesis, and students could be still recognised in our university community, all identifying characteristics were omitted. Our students' information and narratives are restricted to the researchers (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001).

Before describing our journeys as supervisor-researchers, we considered imperative to provide background information about ourselves including our education level, teaching and research experience, current activities in the university, and supervision experience. We all have similar academic backgrounds, having all obtained a bachelor's degree in English teaching, a master's in Applied Linguistics, and we all recently graduated from our PhD programs. We all have 12 years of experience in university, teaching undergraduate and graduate courses. Our experience as researchers slightly varies. While Juanita has been a researcher for eight years, Monica and Tammy have six years of experience. Although we share common research interests such as teachers' professional development, each one of us has also a specific area of focus. That is, Monica's research concentrates on listening developing in a second language, Juanita's on language evaluation, and Tammy's on teacher research in university education and communities of practice as a space for teacher professional development. The three of us have supervised several theses and served as theses examiners.

Our journeys

In this section, we present our stories organised in four separate themes, which emerged organically from the two levels of coding of our written stories, to portray the navigation and tensions between our roles and experiences during the supervising process, and how we perceive supervision as a tool for our own professional development as supervisor-researchers. Throughout the analysis, we considered the relationship of the themes to the literature and the complete data set to guarantee an integrated analysis (Ayres, 2008). Within these themes, we have included the voices of our students, making the relevant connections.

Navigating our dual role as supervisor-researchers

We decided to retrospectively analyze the dynamics involved in our activities supervising theses from a supervisor-researcher perspective with the purpose of reflecting on and informing our role of supervisors. In this reflection process we seek to find the positive aspects that have worked and improve those that have been an obstacle or constraint. In this first vignette, we present how we have navigated between these two stances:

> During the time I was supervising some master program theses, I had a dual role, as a supervisor-researcher. I was teaching and helping my students to conduct their research, but also I was learning and being helped by them. I can also say that I was part of their research, as another researcher, because I helped them to find material and information that could help them in their studies. (Juanita)

My main role has been as a thesis supervisor. I have supervised 2 undergraduate theses and 3 master´s theses. In the process, I have looked at my students work and applied different strategies to help them improve. In many ways, I have used reflection to analyze the situations and make informed decisions. (Mónica)

When I have to work with my students, supervising their theses, I see myself as a supervisor-researcher because I not only guide my students in the process of researching their own classrooms, but I examine my process as a supervisor looking at and examining my students' newly gained research practices. Reflecting on and analyzing our journeys (my students and mine) provides insights into the relationship dynamics, the thesis writing, and the results obtained. (Tammy)

While being thesis supervisors, several aspects need to be acknowledged and given special attention. We consider that examining our habits, practices, and responsibilities is imperative as they might have direct influence and impact on our students' outcomes:

When I embark on working with a student in their research project, my priority is to know what their goals and expectations are. So usually, I set up a meeting with them and talk about what they want and how they want to achieve it. From there we set up a plan that includes a meeting schedule, deadlines for sending progress, individual and joint responsibilities, among other 'in-house' organisation. (Tammy)

I consider my supervisees are a priority, so a habit I have when I work with them is to give them feedback as soon as possible. We meet once a month to check all the progress

they have and answer questions about their doubts. We agree that everything they work on has to be checked by me first, so they plan every class or activity in advance and email it to me for revision. We both have responsibilities, in my case, it is to give feedback as soon as possible, and in their case to work hard to have what is planned before the deadline. (Juanita)

To start with, I usually check the research proposal, which the students email to me. Then, I usually arrange a meeting to clarify things and tell them what I expect from them. I also arrange meetings to talk about problems, questions, and so on and to encourage students to keep working hard. I think that as a supervisor my major responsibility is to guide students during the whole process and make them learn to do research and also to become good writers. For that reason, I also make comments about coherence, cohesion, and grammar and punctuation mistakes. (Mónica)

It is imperative to set the ground and the expectations for both the supervisor and supervisee from the initial stages of the thesis if the desire is to achieve a successful pedagogical relationship (Grant and Graham, 1999) and a high-quality final product. Putting into action the strategies suggested by Ashari (2012) regarding expectations and feedback has made a difference during our supervision process.

Tensions between the different roles and positions we hold
There are times in which holding a dual role might be conflicting, especially when trying to balance being a researcher and a thesis supervisor. Through the extracts below, we illustrate how

navigating through these roles and setting the boundaries not to be intrusive in our students'
learning journey has sometimes been difficult:

> Trying to observe students (as a supervisor-researcher) as they walk through the path of
> becoming researchers without interfering is sometimes a little bit difficult since as a
> supervisor, you have to guide them through the path. So, I observe their reactions,
> changes in mindset, reflections, and comments about my suggestions and explanations.
> (Mónica)

> I usually struggle trying to balance these two positions. Most of the times remaining loyal
> to my teacher researcher identity has helped students develop their research projects.
> However, I must recognise that sometimes my preconceptions of research have prevailed,
> hindering my students' freedom to make choices. It has been difficult, but I am learning
> from experience that boundaries between my two identities are also necessary. (Tammy)

> I consider it is a difficult task. To have these two roles can sometimes cause a dilemma
> because one person is in charge of considering the supervisor identity as well as the
> researcher one. As researchers, we need to be very attentive to what happens around us
> and work in a reflective way to improve and better understand our teaching practices for a
> better professional development. (Juanita)

It is therefore in this learning process of supervision that we need to apply not only our
research knowledge but also our pedagogical experience (Vehviläinen & Löfström, 2016) to

foster a collaborative environment that benefits our students and ourselves personally and professionally.

The supervision process

The third theme we identified was the supervision process itself. Within this process, we have included several important aspects or subthemes that emerged from the analysis: the relationship with students, their expectations, the feedback we provided, and the final products. Furthermore, we have included their voices, which as aforementioned were collected through questionnaires.

Relationship with students

The relationship with students is pivotal as it can be decisive in terms of the collaboration, engagement, and final results. It has to be based on mutual trust and respect and has to go beyond the intellectual sphere as students need even emotional support. However, this relationship should not be confused with friendship due to the conflict of interest involved. In this sense, Waghid (2007) argues that supervisors and supervisees should have a critical friendship, in which supervision becomes dialogical, compassionate and critical, resulting in rigorous and compelling theses.

> We had, and even now we still have a good relationship. I think we became colleagues more than supervisor and supervisee. We shared material, ideas, thoughts, and sometimes personal experiences. I think we created a very good team. I also tried to motivate them when I noticed they were getting demotivated, telling them to keep working, and giving them support in any aspect they needed. One of my students, Elena, mentioned that our compatibility was an important factor in the progress of her work. She was grateful

especially for the support and encouragement in the stressing times while writing the thesis. (Juanita)

At the beginning, when my role is to pinpoint their mistakes, I can say that the students might feel a little bit uncomfortable, but later, when they realise that I'm making them work hard to get a very good final product, they understand that it is in their own interests. So, at the end, they feel grateful to me (they have directly told me so). (Mónica)

I have always believed that a relationship student-teacher or in this case supervisor-supervisee, should be horizontal. The power dynamics traditionally involved should be diminished as we are learning from each other. Having a good relationship with students, who I see and consider my colleagues has lead us to successful completion of work and later collaboration. One of my supervisees acknowledged that the continuous support inspired her to work hard on the development of her research. (Tammy)

The three of us have common practices when supervising our students' work. We use a combination of the models of supervision suggested by Dysthe (2002), but in each one of us one model predominates. Monica follows a combination of the teaching and the apprenticeship model; interestingly, what is particular about Monica is that the she follows the teaching model with the student-teachers of the BA program and the apprenticeship model with the MA student-teachers. Perhaps the fact that MA students are already in-service teachers makes her look at them as less dependent and more experienced. In Juanita's case, she favours the apprenticeship model because as Monica she sees her student-teachers as colleagues. Tammy follows a

combination of the apprenticeship and partnership model, feeling more identified with the latter, particularly due to the type of relationship with the students and the type of feedback she provides.

Our expectations and our students' expectations

We expect our supervisees to work, be responsible, finish their theses and graduate, but most importantly, to learn. In addition, our supervisees also recognised the expectations they had from us regarding time, feedback and support:

> One of the objectives I had with these students was that they learn, graduating was important, but I think more important than that is learning and getting experience in research, and I think all of them did, in different levels, but they learnt how to conduct research. (Juanita)

> What I expect from them is to become independent writers and understand it is their responsibility. Sometimes they expect I write for them, but when I tell them to first read about their common mistakes so they won't make them again, they understand that it is their responsibility. (Mónica)

> My expectations for my students are always high. First I expect they finish their thesis successfully and on time, but most importantly I expect they achieve their personal and professional goals which go beyond a written document. I expect from them developing as reflective teachers who can transform their teaching practices and students' learning

experiences through their research. In this sense, a student that worked with us explained

what he expected from the supervisors, which can be summarised as guidance and advice

on improving their work, making it relevant for the future. (Tammy)

As we mentioned above, setting the rules from the onset has made the process more

beneficial especially for our student-teachers as they have been able to successfully finish their

theses.

Providing feedback

This aspect is particularly important because it is when students feel the most supported and

guided. What we have observed is that students value the type of feedback that is constructive,

supportive and timely (Ashari, 2012), and they appreciate when having the opportunity to

discuss and arrive to a consensus:

It was not a problem because any time I provided feedback they agreed, and if not we

talked, we got to a consensus and at the end we always agreed. When I told them to

change something I supported my ideas, the same as they did when they did not agree on

what I told them to do. (Juanita)

I can say that providing feedback is hard work because it takes a lot of time, which is

usually hard to set aside for me (since I work 2 jobs). I usually ask the students to email

me their work when they have written 8 pages or so (so that the work does not

accumulate at the end), but they usually wait until they finish writing a whole section. I

try not to take more than a week to send the document back. Sometimes it's not

comfortable to me to call attention to their mistakes, especially to the Master's program

students since they are already teachers, and I can say that at first the feel a little annoyed

by that, but then later they have thanked me for this. (Mónica)

I usually try to provide feedback as quickly as possible because I am aware of the need

students have to continue working on their projects. I try not to only point at syntax or

punctuation errors (as an English teacher I am tempted to do so), but I focus on more in-

depth aspects of the research. I usually challenge their choices to provoke their critical

thinking. (Tammy)

When giving feedback, we apply the technical and interpersonal competencies (Ashari,

2012) required to revise and edit their written work, and provide the necessary intellectual and

emotional support in a process in which we are co-learning with our student-teachers(Casanave,

2014).

Final products (theses)

The ultimate goal in the thesis writing journey is to obtain a high quality final product that can be

presented to examiners and lead to successful graduation. For us, it is imperative to highlight that

alongside having the final written thesis, the learning involved in the process is important.

I am happy with their final products, all of them are of good quality. I would have liked

them to publish their work, write an article or participate in a congress, but I think those

were not their priority. However, I am happy with what my students and I did and what we learnt. Elena, one of my students agreed when she mentioned that she felt satisfied with the final product and that she learnt from the experience and from me. (Juanita)

I can say that I'm quite content with the final thesis my students have written. I also know that they have learned a lot during the process. One of my students shared that she felt proud of the final product she created with my help. She highlighted that it was top quality work. (Mónica)

Every finished thesis has been a sign of the mutual collaboration with my students. One of them mentioned that the final result of a research process is the product of a team, the supervisor and the student-teacher. I always tell my supervisees that the effort is theirs and that they have to enjoy the results. I am proud of the work they have produced and who they have become academically and professionally after finishing their theses. (Tammy)

Finishing a thesis is completing a pedagogical relationship in which we as supervisors together with our student-teachers collaborate in a social learning activity. It is in this activity that, as mentioned by Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998), critical negotiation and active participation, which lead to the successful construction of (researcher) identities, are involved.

Supervision as a path for our own professional development

As it has been mentioned throughout the chapter, supervising theses provides several opportunities for learning which translate into improvement as teachers, researchers, and supervisors. In this sense, we provide our personal accounts on how these roles have supported our continuous professional development:

> I think supervising theses is an excellent path for our professional development because we need to prepare and read about the topics of our supervisees. We learn from and with them as they become experts in the area they are researching. Definitely, being a thesis supervisor demands us a lot of time and effort to prepare in the area of the project we are supervising. It is a way in which we construct our supervisor-researcher identity because we develop the sense of belonging to a teacher community, where we have the same interests and necessities. We also start thinking about our knowledge and its relation with our beliefs, and of course how they affect our teaching practices. I think being the supervisor of a thesis is a hard work, but it is necessary to mention that besides helping supervisees with their project, I learned from them, not only academically, but also personally. Some of them taught me to organise my time, because besides working on their theses they were teachers, parents, they had to take care of their homes and children, and sometimes even dealt with health problems. (Juanita)

> I think that with every thesis I have directed, I have grown as a supervisor-researcher. I have seen my students improve during the process and feel satisfied at the end. Seeing my students try to improve their teaching practices and come out with innovative ways to

teach has been motivating as a thesis supervisor. I have been encouraged by their creative ideas to be more prepared to guide them during the process. (Mónica)

When supervising a thesis, I ask my students to reflect on their daily teaching activities and to look for opportunities to understand and address the issues that affect the educational context in general and their language classrooms in particular through critical research. My main focus has been motivating students to become agents of change which is one of the main characteristics of teacher research. Writing a thesis could be the first encounter with research which could lead them to developing new researcher identities. (Tammy)

For all of us, supervising theses has definitely provided the most practical opportunities for our professional development as teachers and supervisor-researchers. Although it is a demanding activity that requires time and effort, working with our students provides opportunities for our personal growth in terms of learning how to be more open-minded to different ideas and approaches, patient, supportive and selfless.

Conclusion

As described throughout the chapter, we consider supervising a learning activity in which the supervisor and supervisee mutually learn from each other. It is a collaborative learning process where the voices of supervisors and supervisees are equally valued in the co-construction of knowledge. Although it is clear, by our individual contributions, that each of us has a different

approach to and follows a different model of supervision, we agree that it is a process/relationship that involves responsibility, commitment, care, generosity, and personal and professional humility.

Sustaining productive relationships with our students can be challenging at times as there is no guarantee that supervisors and supervisees are a suitable match of interests, personalities, research stances, styles, among others. We have to acknowledge that sometimes we have felt more connected with one student more than others because their research has been closer to our interests or research approaches.

Our journeys as supervisor-researchers has taught us the great responsibility we have being involved in our students' learning and construction of researcher identities. Bearing in mind the decisive role we have in our students' goals, this makes us question the need for further training to improve supervision. The knowledge we have mainly emerges from our experience as three times thesis writers (our BA, MA, and PhD theses), but we have not been formally trained to be thesis supervisors. Perhaps our experiences might have resulted in using the same advising techniques we received which could have somehow signified an obstacle for some students (Halse & Malfroy, 2010; Lee, 2007). Although experience and our trajectories as theses' writers inform our current supervision role and have an impact on our students' work, we consider pivotal to find training opportunities that will translate into more critical and successful supervision practices that could benefit our students' progress and final results.

This chapter which, as aforementioned, takes a trioethnographic approach compiled our conversations and the interpretations we made in relation to the relevant literature and the voices of our students. Taking an emic position in this study and to write this piece, in which we are the researchers and also the participants, poses several limitations in regards to subjectivity which is

usually criticised by the broad academic audience. However, by presenting our stories in a naturalistic way and explaining the process in detail, we have maintained transparency of our interpretations at all times. Furthermore, we invited our students to the conversation and integrated their voices into our narratives, making them more explicit and reliable.

We have embraced the role we have been given as thesis supervisors and use it as a vehicle for our professional development as supervisor-researchers. We consider that observing our work as supervisors and also our students' progress is a powerful tool that helps us better understand our practice and promote our students' learning and development of a new researcher identity.

Writing this chapter was a thriving opportunity to share and reflect upon our experiences while researching our students' theses writing, supervising their research, and encouraging them to conduct teacher research as a way to improve their teaching practice, their own and their students' experience, and as a vehicle to develop their researcher identities. Conducting the study portrayed in this chapter involved engaging in critical conversations that made us retrospectively reflect not only on our current practices as supervisors, but also on our trajectories as supervisees as the only informal training we had. Furthermore, inviting our students, now colleagues, to the conversation was pivotal as they sometimes reaffirmed and other times contested our assumptions.

The reflection process required for conducting this study and writing the chapter was itself an opportunity for developing professionally and personally. Through this research we have been able to understand, evaluate and become critical of our practice as supervisors to make the necessary adjustments to improve it. Writing this chapter together and analysing our conversations and stories opened up the opportunities for collaboration and mutual

understanding that empowered us as supervisor-researchers thus becoming an avenue for developing professionally in these two roles.

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